



THE FREE-HOLDER

SUMMER 1997 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

- ♦ WESTWARD HO!
- ♦ STORY OF A TORY FORAGER
- ♦ CELTS IN COLONIAL OYSTER BAY, III
- ♦ MORE FOR SOCIETY'S COLLECTIONS

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.

This is to Certify,
That John Wright
and Sophia Weeks were,
with their mutual consent, lawfully joined together in Holy
MATRIMONY, which was solemnized by me, in the presence
of credible witnesses.

Given at Oyster Bay ----- this 21st day
of June ----- in the year of our Lord one thousand
eight hundred and forty seven

Marmaduke Earle,
Minister of the Gospel.

Sold by Janson & Bell, Nassau-street.

JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF RECENT DONATIONS TO THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY! SEE PAGE 9!

THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

With this issue we begin our second volume of *The Freeholder*. Your response has been greater than we had thought possible when we began. There are many people who deserve thanks, especially our contributors of both articles and the wherewithal to print the magazine.

As our readership grows, so grows the Society's membership. And as our membership grows, so too grow our collections, volunteer base, events, and so on. Show your support for our efforts by telling two friends about the Historical Society and *The Freeholder*. Ask them to join us. They'll be glad you did!

Officers and Trustees of the Oyster Bay Historical Society

Mrs. Robert E Pittis.....President
Mrs. William Floyd-Jones.....1st Vice President
Denis J. O'Kane2nd Vice President
Charles D. W. Thompson.....Treasurer
Mrs. Joseph T. DonohueRecording Secretary
Mrs. Samuel D. Parkinson.....Corresponding Sec'y

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mrs. M. Farrag Ahmed
Mrs. Albert E. Amos
Mrs. David C. Clark
John B. Cleary, Esq.
Michael J. Hambrook
John E. Hammond

Ms. Linda D. Heslin
Richard F. Kappeler
Mrs. Robert P. Koenig
Frank J. Olt, Jr.
Warrick C. Robinson
Edward B. Ryder IV
Mrs. Robert P. Sibert
Mrs. John H. G. Stuurman
James B. Townsend
Stephen V. Walker
Mrs. F. William Wall

HONORARY TRUSTEES

Edward F. L. Bruen, Esq.
Dr. Howard E. Imhof
Miss Dorothy H. McGee

Thomas A. Kuehhas..... Director

CONTENTS

The Post Rider.....2	Currents of the Bay.....9
The Conestoga Wagon:3	Yesterday in Oyster Bay.....13
Netherlanders Had a Hand In It	Test Your Knowledge.....13
Lee Myles	The Gathering Place.....14
Seth Norton: Tory Forager.....5	Celts & Celtic-Speakers in.....17
E. Magnani	Colonial North America and
Commodore Swan.....7	Oyster Bay, Part III
John Hammond	Gerald A. John Kelly
Ask Uncle Peleg.....8	Aunt Eeek.....19

THE POST RIDER



To the Editor:

In reference to Lee Myles' piece on Dutch skaters (Winter 1997) and Karen Ward's rejoinder (Spring 1997), in his book *Holland of Today*, 1909, George Wharton Edwards offered two sentences that suggest the age of Dutch skating may

be pushed back many years. Or, maybe not. "The Hollanders learned to skate from the Romans, and examples of the earliest skates which they used may be seen in different museums. They were made of bones, smoothed and polished to a flat surface, and were tied to the feet with strings."

Unhappily, Edwards gives no sources nor does he tell us where the Romans

THE FREEHOLDER
of the
Oyster Bay Historical Society
Vol. 2 No. 1 Summer 1997

Editorial Staff

Editor: Thomas A. Kuehhas
Contributing Editors: Elliot M. Sayward
Richard Kappeler
Rick Robinson

Address Editorial Communications to:

Editor, The Freeholder
P.O. Box 297

Oyster Bay, NY 11771

Email us at OBHistory@aol.com

The Freeholder of the Oyster Bay Historical Society is published quarterly with the generous assistance of private individuals. The views expressed herein are not those of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, but of the individual authors.

Purpose: The Oyster Bay Historical Society was founded in 1960 with the express purpose of preserving the history of the Town of Oyster Bay. The Society maintains a museum and research library in the Town-owned c.1720 Earle-Wightman House, 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay.

Call (516) 922-5032 for more information.

Copyright 1997 by the
Oyster Bay Historical Society

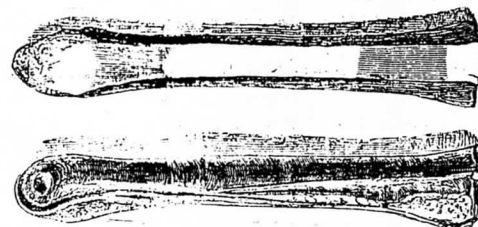
ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

The marriage certificate of John Wright and Sophia Weeks, signed by our own Reverend Marmaduke Earle, was part of a recent donation to the Historical Society. Included were family photographs of this same John Wright! See story on p. 9.

Oyster Bay Historical Society Collection

learned. I enclose a picture of a pair of bone skates excavated in London and supposedly dating back to the 12th century, illustrated many years ago.

James Varnum



PRIMITIVE BONE SKATES

THE FREEHOLDER SUMMER 1997

THE CONESTOGA WAGON: NETHERLANDERS HAD A HAND IN IT A "DUTCH NEXT DOOR" FEATURE

By Lee Myles



The "Regulars" were haughty men,
Since five or six they always drove,
With broad-tread wheels and English beds,
They bore their proud and lofty heads,
And always thought themselves above,
The homespun, plain,
"Militia-men,"
Who wagoned only now and then.
from *Wagoning* by H.L. Fisher

Someday we will discuss the wagons introduced by the Dutch and used on Long Island and on the New York and New Jersey mainland. Our present subject however, takes us to the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Fisher's lines above refer to the large, long distance freighting industry, founded early in the 18th century and centered in Pennsylvania but penetrating widely into other areas. The industry and its chief vehicle, the Conestoga wagon, trace their history to 1716, just two years before Penn's death. Although folklore says the Conestoga wagon was "invented" or "developed" by the German immigrants, called Pennsylvania Dutchmen, who lived in Lancaster County's Conestoga Valley, that fiction was already being contradicted when Fisher's poem was published in 1888. Fisher did mention in another stanza, the "plain red

[Pennsylvania] Dutch beds that were driven by the 'Militia-men.'" The militiamen were farmers, often Germans, who were doubling as teamsters during periods of slow work at home. Their wagons, built by the same wheelwrights who built the big Conestoga freighters, were smaller than the freighters and employed four or fewer horses. They had, however, the same general features and design as the wagons of the "Regulars" and undoubtedly shared the same ancestry.

The general features of a Conestoga are to be found for the most part in earlier wagons of Dutch and English make. Actual examples of Dutch and English wagons dating before 1800 are almost non-existent but there are a number of pictures which support this view. Further, Dutch and English wagons contemporary with Conestogas seem to have inherited features from their antecedents that match those of the Conestoga. As the likelihood that the Conestoga could have influenced overseas developments is infinitesimal, it must be concluded that shared features are either independent inventions or an inheritance. The weight of evidence seems to bar independent invention.

The features that define a Conestoga wagon are: more or less canted front panel and tailgate; carving on front panel and tailgate; front panel and tailgate mortised or notched to engage extended side rails; rails of side panels bow downward at center although on some examples bottom rail is nearly straight; a cloth tilt or wagon

cover supported by wooden hoops; rear wheels of greater diameter than front wheels; extra side pieces curved to match the bow of the top rail but straight at the top; metal hubcaps on some examples; blue painted wagon bed over red running gearfeed trough suspended across tailgate; toolbox mounted on left side panel; wagon jack, axe and tar pot carried as regular equipment; an arched ring of bells mounted just ahead of the horse's withers; and much decorated iron work.

As has doubtless been noted by readers of "The Dutch Next Door" pieces, I believe that the men and women of the low lands across the North Sea from the sceptered isle made many contributions, often not importantly noticed, to the culture of the English at home and to the settlers they sent across the Atlantic to populate their thirteen American colonies. One of these contributions was the Dutch influence on the wagons of England and early America. I had not progressed far with this idea when, ten years ago, I read in *New World Dutch Studies* an article by David Steven Cohen, "Dutch-American Farming: Crops, Livestock and Equipment, 1623-1900." One of the pieces of equipment Cohen discussed was the Dutch wagon. Cohen referred to opinions and evidence that supported the notion that the English wagon was descended from that of the Dutch. I had collected similar material and was pleased by his thoughts on the subject, but more pleased by his feeling that the Conestoga wagon was descended from the Dutch one by way of the English. Can

we find support for the possibility Cohen suggested?

Cohen is not the only student of the subject who has mentioned the English debt to the Dutch for four wheeled transport. J. Geraint Jenkins, the English folklorist, offers a similar opinion in *The English Farm Wagon*. James Arnold, whose beautiful and meticulous drawings of English wagons are famous, notes kinship especially between some of the North Lincolnshire wagons and the early Dutch ones. Incidentally, an 1829 wagon from North Lincolnshire in his *The Farm Wagons Of England and Wales* has a remarkable resemblance to some of the still existing Conestogas. Laszlo Tarr commented in his *History of the Carriage*, "The wagon with shaft came to England from Holland, as indicated also by its very name, the word 'wagon' being of Dutch origin." Originally the Dutch spelt it "waghen" as the English often did in the 16th century. An English mathematical treatise of 1570 noted, "As, the force which one man hath with the Duche waghen rack, therewith to set up agayne, a mighty waghen laden, being overthrown." "Mighty waghen" tells us that large wagons were nothing new when Pennsylvania wheelwrights began to build them and the "Duche waghen rack" says the same thing about wagon jacks, a feature of the Conestoga.

Although no Conestogas are left to us that date before 1800 we know from the researches of Evelyn A. Benson in the account books of James Logan, the commercial representative of William Penn, that the wagon of

that name dates to the second decade of the 18th c. In 1716 Logan established an irregular freight wagon service between Philadelphia and the Conestoga Valley in Lancaster County using one wagon. By the end of the next year the fleet had grown to three and Logan was referring to the wagons as "Conestoga" wagons because that was their destination. Not only had the era of long distance transport in America begun, but the wagons employed had received a name that was to stay with them long after they ceased to be the chosen vehicle of the industry.

We don't really know what the Conestoga wagon of 1716 looked like or how much it resembled the vehicle that many of us would recognize from illustrations or visits to museums. Edwin Wolf III says in *Philadelphia* that Logan adapted the vehicle used for army supply trains in Europe. He offers no documentation, but even if it is a guess, it is a reasonable one. "Europe" as a source, however, seems less likely than England. Assuming that Logan and his drivers dealt with English wheelwrights in Philadelphia, as would have been likely in the town's early years, English models are more likely than Continental ones. The English had large military freight wagons. A map of the Battle of Naseby, 1645, shows a number of them and some of the features of the Conestoga can be distinguished, although there is no substantial resemblance. However a British military wagon, perhaps made for the purpose, perhaps conscripted from some farmer, was illustrated



Pyne's illustration of a British military wagon

by W.H. Pyne before 1808. It is not hard to see it as a descendant of a prototype of a Conestoga.

Let us consider whether the characteristic features of the Conestoga can be found in Dutch and English wagons. We will not be finding every feature on every wagon. Some will have none, some few, some many, but I think we will find enough to credit the Dutch with handing to the English the features that define the Conestoga.

The most noticeable feature of the Conestoga is its tilt or wagon cover supported by wooden hoops. The feature is very old but its appearance in Netherlandish art has meaning for us. For example, Bruegel's 16th c. picture of skaters in Flanders shows a cloth covered wagon with large wheels behind and down-bowed sides. Many such wagons can be found in Dutch and Flemish art. English pictures post-dating the believed 16th c. introduction of the "waghen" offer many representations of covered wagons with large rear wheels. Down-bowed sides are also to be seen.

Dutch and English wagons show the same notching or mortising of tail gates to accept extensions of the side rails by which the gates are retained in place. Where there are front panels similar features are found. These features are

continued on p. 20

SETH NORTON, TORY FORAGER

by E. Magnani

After Washington's defeat at the Battle of Long Island on August 25, 1776, the Island was completely controlled by the British. As can be imagined, food and heating requirements for an army of 32,000 men and horses (excluding militia) were enormous. Various depots were set up on the Island where forage was collected and stored for local use and also shipped to the central commissary in New York City.

Seth Norton was an American Tory who served as an Assistant Commissary (forage master) for the Loyalist brigades during the Revolutionary War. The Nassau County Museum Collection at the Long Island Studies Institute holds a collection of over 70 letters, to and from Norton, which span the period from December 1774 to September 1808. Norton was originally from Farmington, Connecticut but served as Assistant Commissary (or Commissioner) in New York City, Philadelphia, Oyster Bay, and Charleston,

South Carolina. Thirty six letters from November 1778 to December 1779 cover his service in the town of Oyster Bay.



COLONEL BANASTRE TARLETON

While Norton was still in Farmington (June 9, 1775), his friend, Jabez Smith, told of a brush with British Regulars which probably refers to British movements just prior to the Battle of Bunker Hill. Smith, who attended Dartmouth College, was then an American Rebel, but Jabez later defected and became a

surgeon in the British Army.

On June 10, 1777, Seth arrived in New York City and worked for a Mr. Coffin, an assistant to Commissary General Daniel Weir. Norton's stepfather, Amos Bull, himself a Commissary in Rhode Island, probably influenced Weir to give Seth his job.

During the winter of 1778, with Seth in Philadelphia, his stepfather wrote that he was in New York and was now head of the Charity School. Bull was an expert in grammar and penmanship and Seth's letters showed his self-consciousness about his talents in these fields. During this time, Bull was trying desperately to bring Seth's mother to New York from Connecticut where she was being harassed by rebel relatives and friends. He later accomplished this with tragic results.

In November 1778, Norton was sent briefly to Jericho, then to Oyster Bay. Col. Simcoe also arrived at this time, but his earliest request was from the

Banastre Tarleton was born in Liverpool on Aug. 21, 1754 the son of a wealthy merchant. He studied law at Liverpool and Oxford but, better suited to a military life, he obtained a commission and came to America with Cornwallis. As a Lt. Colonel he took over the British Legion after Lord Cathcart left. The Legion was among the most effective of the Loyalist units during the Revolutionary War.

Serving under Sir William Howe, at Philadelphia he distinguished himself at Brandywine in Sept. 1777 and elsewhere during the next two years. He was at Jericho in Nov. '78 and Sag Harbor in Feb.

'79. It was during that time he assumed command of the Legion and left with Cornwallis for the Carolinas in 1780.

In the Carolinas he ravaged ruthlessly and fought against Francis Marion, Thomas Sumpter, and "Light Horse Harry" Lee. He won fights at Waxhaws and Catawba Fords, but lost the battle of Cowpens to General Daniel Morgan. He pursued General Greene into Virginia where his men committed many outrages on the locals. Cornwallis sternly disapproved and hanged two of his men. While in Virginia he almost captured Jefferson who left

Monticello ten minutes before the Legion arrived. He surrendered at Yorktown with Cornwallis.

Tarleton was a courageous man, and below medium height. He possessed many of the attributes of a good commander which were so lacking in the British Army during the war. Aside from this, he was despicable. He was arrogant, cruel, and an utterly selfish ingrate. In spite of the favors that Cornwallis gave him, Tarleton attacked him bitterly in his book on the history of the American campaigns. He was painted by Reynolds and Gainsborough. He died on Jan. 25, 1833 at the age of 79.

arrogant Banastre Tarleton:

*Sir
Agreeable to former Custom and
promise. I am to request that you
will furnish the Bearer with a
Barrel of Oatmeal for the Fox
Hounds.
I don't doubt you will readily
comply with requisition.*

*Remain
Your ob. Servt.
Banastre Tarleton
26 Cal.
Jericho, Nov 11, 1778*

As a commissary in Oyster Bay, Norton was responsible for obtaining hay, oats, and foodstuffs and shipping them to New York. In addition, he received and disbursed these items to Colonel John Simcoe's Queen's Rangers who were



LIEUT. GENERAL SIMCOE, FIRST GOVERNOR OF UPPER CANADA

stationed in this town. Much of the shipping was done by water and supply vessels sailed in convoys because of rebel raids from Connecticut. A list of vessels was given in the following letter:

New York 28 Feby 79

*Mr. Norton
Sir,
You'll receive off the Ranger,
Trans. Penart Master, Three
hundred and twenty bags of Oats
weighing 57920 pounds, have also
put on board one dozen of Forks, at*

*foot you have list of vessels ordered
for Hay which when loaded you'll
order part to the Bridge, Marstons*

JOHN GRAVES SIMCOE

John Graves Simcoe was born in England on Feb. 25, 1752. He was the son of Captain John Simcoe of the Royal Navy who piloted General Wolfe's Quebec expedition.

Simcoe was educated at Eton and Oxford and was commissioned an Ensign in the 35th Regiment of the Line, which he joined in Boston on the morning of Bunker Hill. In 1775 he gained command of the Queen's Rangers, a corps of Loyalists formed by the famous French and Indian War-era partisan, Robert Rogers. He made it one of the better Loyalist fighting units. Under his command they fought for General Howe at Brandywine and Germantown.

In 1778, Simcoe raided Southern New Jersey and was taken prisoner at the Battle of Monmouth, but was soon exchanged. Following his (Winter '78-'79) tour of duty on Long Island and some outpost work in Westchester County, Simcoe participated in Benedict Arnold's Virginia expedition. His Rangers captured Williamsburg and fought against General Von Steuben. When Cornwallis entered Virginia from the Carolinas, Simcoe joined him at Yorktown and was in the general surrender of Oct. 19, 1781. Years later Simcoe was appointed Lt. Governor of Upper Canada.

Simcoe was a good soldier and an honorable man, although irascible and touchy. He hated the Americans because of the poor treatment he received while a prisoner of war, and for the execution of his friend John Andre. He wrote a book detailing his campaigns in America which was published in New York in 1843. Colonel Simcoe died at Exeter on October 26, 1806.

*Wharf & here--that is, 2 to the
Bridge, 8 to Marstons Wharf and
rest to Base Market.*

*I am your Obed. Serv.
Ben James
You'll observe the above are five
Bushel Bags*

- 1 Juno Gilles*
- 2 Thomas Hutchings*
- 3 Favorite Spence*
- 4 Speedwell Wright*
- 5 George Davis*
- 6 Dorothy Davis*
- 7 Isabelle Major*
- 8 Ranger Penart*
- 9 Deborah*
- 10 Polly Fay*

The Favorite and the Polly were schooners while all the rest, with the exception of the unknown Deborah, were sloops. The convoys were usually escorted by an armed ship from Huntington.

As previously noted, the requirements for food, wood and fodder for the troops were enormous. Included in the papers is an account of forage issued to British troops under General Matthew from July 7 to July 14, 1779. For that time span, the totals shown were 3105 pounds of hay and 12,408 pounds of oats. For the data given it appears that the ration of hay per horse per day was 15 pounds. If this estimate is accurate, the grand total of hay for all rations disbursed was 31,320 pounds. This may be a low figure, since typically the ration of oats per horse per day was 4 pounds but mounted troops and the Brigade Major (typically a courier) received a double ration of 8 pounds, General officers 7 pounds, and the General Hospital 6 pounds.

continued on p. 15

COMMODORE SWAN

by John Hammond

In days past, many people around Oyster Bay were known by nicknames; Theodore Roosevelt was known as "The Colonel" after his heroics in the Spanish-American War. Among the many local friends of Theodore Roosevelt was his friend from childhood, William Lincoln Swan, or "The Commodore," as he came to be known.

Swan's father, Benjamin Lincoln Swan, Jr., was one of the early members of the summer community in Oyster Bay and in the 1850s he and his brother Edward became permanent residents of Oyster Bay. Their father had given each of them considerable land holdings in Oyster Bay and Benjamin Swan, Jr. built his home on Cove Neck in 1852. Benjamin and Edward continued their affiliation and membership in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York while also becoming very active in the affairs of the First Presbyterian Church at Oyster Bay. Benjamin Lincoln Swan, Jr.'s uncle, the Reverend Benjamin Lincoln Swan, had joined the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in 1838. Shortly after the Civil War, Benjamin L. Swan, Jr. and his brothers Edward and Otis recommended their uncle to fill the vacant pulpit at the First Presbyterian Church at Oyster Bay. Reverend Swan came to Oyster Bay and served as pastor from 1866 until 1875.

William L. Swan, the son of Benjamin Lincoln Swan, Jr. and Julia Strong Post, was born in New York City on May 28, 1847. He spent the summers of his

youth around the waters of Oyster Bay and developed an intense love of nature and the sea. He shared this love with one of his boyhood friends, Theodore Roosevelt, whose family came to Oyster Bay in 1851, when Roosevelt's grandfather rented a house from Billy Swan's grandfather. It was to this house, called *Tranquillity*, that Roosevelt's father brought his family in the summers.



William Lincoln Swan

Collection of John Hammond

Billy Swan saw the country torn apart by the Civil War as he entered Princeton University. He continued to spend his summers sailing the bay in a small twenty-five foot jib and mainsail boat he rented from a local bayman. After graduating Princeton, Swan attended Columbia Law School and received his law degree. As a graduation present he was given a forty-two foot centerboard cabin sloop which he named the *Glance*. The *Glance* became one of the most famous small yachts in American yachting history. It was aboard the *Glance* in 1871 that Billy Swan met with a group of friends who shared his

interest in sailing. This meeting resulted in the formation of the Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club in 1872 and Swan was elected the first Commodore of the club. Thereafter Billy Swan was known as Commodore Swan. The Yacht Club has a half model of the *Glance* in a place of honor in its clubhouse. In 1873 Swan took delivery of a new vessel; a 76 foot, 10 inch yacht built in Brooklyn for him. He named it the *Ariel*.

In 1870, Swan became a member of Holland Lodge No. 8, Free and Accepted Masons. This began a very active involvement with masonry which was to last the rest of his life. In 1888, Billy Swan began organizing petitions for the formation of a Masonic lodge in Oyster Bay along with Dr. George Washington Faller. Their efforts finally succeeded with the granting of a charter for the formation of Matinecock Lodge No. 806 in 1893. Swan served as the first Master of the Lodge and was instrumental in his boyhood friend Theodore Roosevelt joining Matinecock Lodge several years later.

While Billy Swan maintained a law practice in New York City, he had inherited considerable wealth at an early age and did not actively pursue law as a profession. By 1887, at age 40, he listed his occupation in the Commercial Directory as "retired" but his interests and involvements were many and varied.

In 1873 he became the Organist and Choir Director at the First Presbyterian Church at Oyster Bay, a position he filled for the next fifty-one years. It was through the choir that he met and

continued on p. 16



ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

I recently returned from a visit to a Living Museum where I heard one of the docents mention something called a bed wrench. The context was somewhat ambiguous and I left the room wondering what she was talking about. A friend told me I might find out if I wrote the Oyster Bay Historical Society.

Edna St. John

While she might have meant a special wrench used to bolt a bed frame together, Peleg thinks it more likely that the implement in question was a T-shaped one used to tighten the bed cords of a rope bed. Necessary to that job were a hammer, several pointed pegs, and the tool mentioned.



To draw successive cords taut the bed wrench was twisted in each cord and turned like a capstan to draw it tighter than could be done pulling by hand. Turned against the bed rail, the wrench would hold the cord taut while a peg was jammed alongside it in its hole in the bedrail. That length of cord would remain in place while the end was threaded back through the opposite rails drawn tight and again pegged in place. And so on.

Dear Uncle Peleg:

Please settle a question. My friend says a smithy is a blacksmith. I say it's a blacksmith shop. He counters with, "What about the village smithy who stands under the spreading chestnut tree in Longfellow's poem?" I reply, "If that's so, why does Longfellow call the proprietor 'the smith' in the next line?" Please give us your opinion.

Charlie Hufschmied

It isn't a matter of opinion. Don't you fellows own a dictionary? Smithy = Blacksmith Shop. That is unless you own one of the American dictionaries that say it also means a smith. This is probably the modern habit of recognizing incorrect usage if it's widespread.

Dear Uncle Peleg:

The pictured object (above) now at Rock Hall Museum came from

a home with an 18th century barn. It is wood, 28" long, 5" wide at the widest point and 3/4" thick. Guesses as to its purpose abound but facts do not emerge.

Crowell Baker

Looking at your object, the confirmed whist fancier would probably think of at least three different work places where it might have been used: the laundry, the dairy, or the bakery. However, to be perfectly frank, it is probably impossible to make an absolutely positive identification from your photo, or even to confine a "maybe" within the three workplaces. If enough material from the environment in which it functioned still clings to the object, a laboratory investigation might do the trick. I don't run that kind of a shop so I am going to offer you what I think is a very strong likelihood. That is, that your wooden instrument was used to work and divide dough in a dough trough. It was called a slice among other names. The illustration is from the 17th century and shows the use, though indistinctly.






CURRENTS OF THE BAY



*This section focuses on the doings of local historical societies, museums, and communities in the Town of Oyster Bay and its neighbors. Upcoming special events, exhibits, lectures, and tours are featured, so send your submissions to the Editor if you would like to see your events covered by **The Freeholder**.*



SOCIETY GIVEN MORE AND MORE AND MORE...

Following closely on the heels of the gift of the Reichman Collection, a number of other important donations have come to the Oyster Bay Historical Society in recent months.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Rosolino donated archival materials related to Reverend Charles Wightman, the Oyster Bay Baptist Church, and the Earle-Wightman House. Included were such items as letters from the TR White House regarding a planned trip to Oyster Bay; an invitation to Ethel Roosevelt's wedding, addressed to the Reverend Wightman; a letter from Theodore Roosevelt praising Reverend Wightman, written weeks before the former President's death; a 1917 diary kept by the Reverend Wightman; and numerous other interesting articles.

A number of people donated photographs to add to the Society's burgeoning collection, including Tulio Donisi, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Flower, Stephen Walker, and a gentleman from South Yarmouth, MA, Christopher J. Richter, who donated a World War II-era photo of the Oyster Bay station,

having heard about the proposed railroad museum.

The Society's collection of decorative arts grew as well: Mary Jane Sayward donated a collection of late 19th century hat pins to the Society, as well as four mid-nineteenth century chairs for use in our research library; and Rick Robinson gave an early locomotive oiling can for future use in the railroad museum.

A wonderful collection of materials related, for the most part, to the Wright Family was donated by Ms Patricia Bentley Eldridge. Among the items in the collection are a scrapbook of photographs of turn of the century Oyster Bay and Wright papers, such as the marriage certificate on our cover, signed by Marmaduke Earle. An early 18th century *Bible* (with some Wright genealogy) and *Book of Common Prayer* were also included, as were an album of identified(!) cartes de visites (early photographs) and several individual ambrotypes.

One of the most fascinating artifacts included in the collection is a small leather and cardboard bound entry book which gives a listing of Town residents and non-residents in the Town of Oyster Bay circa 1815. Subsequent to the pages

containing these lists are receipts kept by Joseph Storrs, dealing with the settling of the estate of Joseph Latting. The entries begin in 1820 and the last entry is in 1828. The Society could use some volunteer assistance in deciphering what this book in particular contains. Such a project would make a wonderful article for a future issue of *The Freeholder* in order to keep our members informed on the day to day operations of the Society. If you are interested, please contact Tom Kuehhas at 922-5032.

REICHMAN ANTIQUE TOOL COLLECTION TO GO ON EXHIBIT

As reported in the last issue of *The Freeholder*, a series of exhibitions, drawn from the Reichman collection's more than 300 items, will be installed at numerous locations in Oyster Bay. Planned to open in August, different aspects of the collection will be covered at each exhibit. For example, exhibits at the Earle-Wightman House will include artifacts from the collection that can be worked into the period rooms as they are currently configured. An early nineteenth century joiner (carpenter) will be hard at work in Reverend Earle's parlor, while artifacts of domestic life will be the focus in the one-room house exhibit. Additional exhibits will be on display in the Discovery

Room, as will research materials related to the collection which can be utilized by visitors interested in finding out more about the tradesmen and their tools.

Other themes to be explored in the remaining exhibits are: the maritime trade of the shipsmith, to be featured in an exhibit at Town Hall; patent models and tools remarkable for their beauty and craftsmanship at the State Bank of Long Island; and larger agricultural implements at the Oyster Bay-East Norwich Public Library.

We could certainly use help in the registration and preservation of the artifacts that make up the Reichman Collection. If any of our readers are interested, please contact Director Tom Kuehhas at 922-5032.

PREPARATIONS FOR THIRD ANNUAL CHILDREN'S FAIR UNDERWAY!

Sunday, September 28th is shaping up to be another great day for the Historical Society. Our Third Annual "Old-Fashioned Country Fair for Children" will be held that day from 12-4 p.m. and will feature craftspeople, hands-on workshops, traditional games, pony rides, a petting zoo, music, and delicious food.

The garden and parking lot behind the Earle-Wightman House will once again be transformed into a fall fantasy featuring colorful balloons, bales of hay, corn stalks and pumpkins.

Co-Chair Mary Beth Donohue stated, "The Fair owes its success to the wonderful community of

Oyster Bay. The business community has offered their support and the Town Board has shown obvious interest in the event. We're hopeful that the many individuals who have worked on the Fair committee will come forward again, baking for the Granny Bake Sale table, setting-up, cleaning-up, and especially manning the various booths, games and crafts tables. "

We hope to see all our members and friends at this year's Fair. Don't miss it!

PAST AND FUTURE OF OB TRAIN STATION DISCUSSED AT ANNUAL MEETING

Attendees of the Society's Annual Meeting, held on June 13 at the Oyster Bay Community Center, were permitted a glimpse at the past, present, and future of the Oyster Bay LIRR Station.

Society director Tom Kuehhas choreographed an hour-long look at the station's history and future plans for the proposed railroad museum. After a brief introduction, Kuehhas introduced Society trustee and local author John Hammond, who gave a

fascinating slide lecture on the history of the Oyster Bay branch of the Long Island Railroad, including several recently-uncovered photographs. This segment was followed by some background on Locomotive #35, slated to be the centerpiece of the museum. Kuehhas showed slides of #35 when it was in service and then introduced members of the Locomotive #35 Restoration Group.

Restoration Group Chairman Steve Torborg chronicled the efforts of the last eight years, the period the group has been working on restoring Locomotive #35 to operating condition. The backbreaking labor that went into the restoration process, and the obstacles overcome by the group throughout, were well-represented in the course of a fifteen minute slide show. But the piece de resistance was a scale model of the layout for the railroad museum, including miniature representations of the station; the locomotive; rolling stock, such as cabooses and passenger cars, which will also be on display; the turn table, and possible parking areas. The audience was invited up to view the model and all were

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Categories of Membership

Individual	\$ 20	Business	\$ 50
Family	\$ 30	Business Sponsor	\$ 100
Contributing	\$ 50	Business Friend	\$ 300
Sponsor	\$ 100	Business Patron	\$ 500+
Sustaining	\$ 250	Benefactor	\$ 1000+
Patron	\$ 500		

Member Benefits: Quarterly Magazine, Members' Party, Invitations to Exhibition Previews and Special Events, 10% Discount on Publications and Workshops. Call 922-5032 for more information on joining the Society.

quite impressed with the possibilities that such a museum offers.

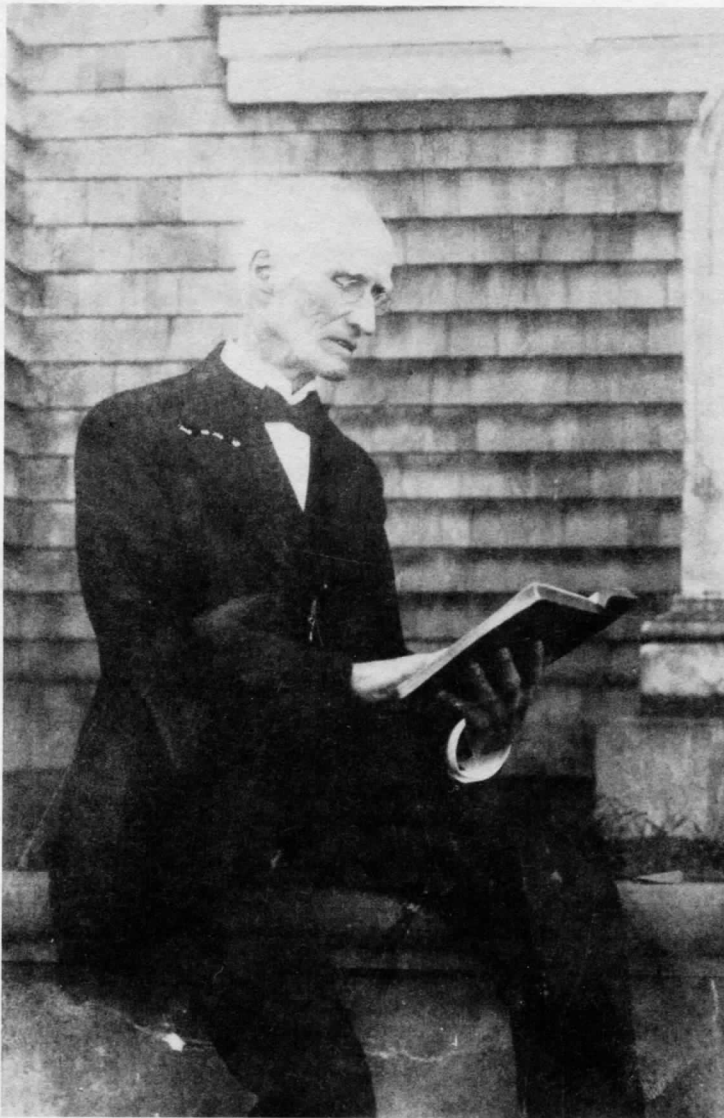
The Society is currently seeking donations of LIRR-related artifacts for eventual placement in the railroad museum. If you have materials you think we might be interested in, please contact Director Kuehhas at 922-5032.

AMITYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The 28th Annual Heritage Fair was another successful event held on the grounds of the Old School on June 7th. 1997 also marks the 100th anniversary of St. Martin of Tours Roman Catholic Church, and a special exhibit has been set up in the museum. The display consists of photographs and documents relating to parish history. It will be on display for the remainder of the year.

CENTRAL PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In late May, Mr. Gerry Holzman introduced the society to the wonder of the Empire State Carousel and the famous



Photograph of Reverend Charles S. Wightman included in materials donated to the Society by Ms Patricia B. Eldridge.

Grumman Carousel. His museum/workshop in Islip is open every Saturday from 10 to 4, except holiday weekends. For more information and directions, contact Gerry at 277-9291. On June 27th, the society took a tour of the Kessler Glass Works in Bethpage. David Kessler and a former employee of his father from the firm's earlier days served as guides.

COE HALL AT PLANTING FIELDS

Coe Hall Executive Director Lorraine Gilligan reports that the Crafts-in-the-Meadow event in mid-May attracted over 200 artisans, food booths and vendors under Camelot tents in the meadow area of Planting Fields. Coe Hall has been open for daily tours since April 1st. Call 922-9210 for more information.

HICKSVILLE GREGORY MUSEUM

The museum has just put out its Summer program schedule, call 822-7505 for more information. The museum's tenth annual Mineral Festival, held on May 17-18, was the best in many years in number of visitors and money raised for the museum.

TOWN OF HUNTINGTON

The Town of Huntington's Historic Preservation Commission has determined that, in its view, the proposed re-use of the Oheka premises (the former Otto Kahn estate) is acceptable and they support it as a valid means of preserving the second largest residence in the United States, by producing sufficient income to sustain the long term

adaptive re-use of the interior and the restoration and maintenance of the exterior of this nationally important cultural resource.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE MASSAPEQUAS

The annual Strawberry Festival was again held on the grounds of the Old Grace Church on June 14th. The church building and cottage are open every Sunday from 2 to 4 P.M. and Society members are on hand to answer questions. Incidentally, the Society is grateful to the Massapequa Volunteer Fire Dept. for putting the bell back on track!

OLD BETHPAGE VILLAGE RESTORATION

A reminder that the 1997 program of Old Time Base-Ball is underway at Old Bethpage Village Restoration. The majority of games are played under the 1887 rules; although a few will be conducted under the 1866 rules as well. Most contests begin on Sunday at 2 P.M., but for complete information, call 574-8401.

SEA CLIFF VILLAGE MUSEUM

The Sea Cliff Village Museum is currently working on their Fall exhibit, entitled "Victorian Secrets: Feminine Fashions From an Elegant Era." The show will focus on the magnificent designs, materials and construction of garments worn from the 1870s Victorian era to the Edwardian Years of the early 20th century.

The exhibit opens on September 20, 1997. Call 671-0090 for hours and more information.

Visit the Oyster Bay Historical Society's website!

<http://members.aol.com/OBHistory>

NEIGHBORHOOD NIGHTS IN OYSTER BAY

Once again, historic sites and park facilities in the Oyster Bay village area are opening their doors **free** of all entrance fees to **local residents**. Each site will provide an evening of entertainment, children's games, prizes and free raffles. All facilities will be open from **6 - 8 p.m.** on their specific Neighborhood Night. A picnic supper is suggested. In case of rain, the event is canceled.

1997 SCHEDULE

- July 15 Earle-Wightman House
922-5032
- July 22 Raynham Hall
922-6808
- July 29 Sagamore Hill National
Historic Site
922-4788
- Aug. 5 Planting Fields
Arboretum
922-9210
- August 12 - Theodore Roosevelt
Memorial Bird Sanctuary
922-3200

The Oyster Bay Historical Society opens this season's program with an evening at the

Earle-Wightman House Museum. Bring the family and a picnic dinner and join your neighbors in the museum's beautifully-maintained gardens for an 18th and early 19th century songfest led by Eric Marten and his fiddle. Eric will tell the stories behind these popular songs of long ago and lead visitors in a sing-along. In addition, tours of the museum, hands on activities, and period children's games are all on tap. Join us!



Another little gem from the Wright Family accession; a Certificate of Merit awarded to Sophia Weekes Wright, c. 1830 See front cover for her marriage certificate and related story p. 9.

Many thanks to Harry L. Dickran of Levon Graphics Corp., 210 Route 109, East Farmingdale, for printing ***The Freeholder*** for the Society. His generosity allows the magazine to reach a much wider audience than was heretofore possible. Please patronize our sponsors!

YESTERDAY IN OYSTER BAY

A PIONEER AS A NEIGHBOR

By S. (Sam) Berliner, III

My old house was, technically, in Glen Head, although the street was in the City of Glen Cove, which made for all sorts of fun. My full legal address should have been Knott Drive, Hamlet of Glen Head, Town of Oyster Bay, Glen Cove P.O., NY 11542, or some such. As it was, I used a Sea Cliff post office box. [Now I live just south of the Bayville Bridge in Mill Neck, with an Oyster Bay street address and I use a Bayville post office box - some things never change!]

The house was built in 1968 on what had once been Francis Baxendale's gentleman's farm. There was an old stock pond to the east toward the LIRR tracks, formed by damming the runoff, and this became a bone of contention after we moved in. Those of us who were Island people loved it; we skated on it in winter and watched and listened to the bullfrogs in summer. Newcomers from the city wanted it fenced off, filled in, or otherwise out of their lives. Their children might drown! Those were the same children who couldn't skate worth a dang, beat the bullfrogs to death, and stoned the Canada geese when they tried to nest.

The development had languished for many years and was finally starting to move ahead ca. 1966. It included the southeast corner of Frank's property just north of North Shore Acres (northeast of Whittings Funeral Home), plus a parcel of Harry Burchell's (entirely in Glen Cove). Harry

had run a cesspool service out of his home on Valentine Avenue. Both Harry and Frank were wonderful neighbors, not necessarily over-fond of some of the other neighbors, but very nice to me. Frank had two humongous dogs that roamed his land and barked louder than the Hound of the Baskervilles. When I suggested that they might be less publicly-boisterous, Frank immediately restrained them, and he continued to do so afterwards.

In first chatting with Frank, what I did for a living came up; I was in engineering, Manager of Support Services at Pall Corporation in those days. Frank brightened up and launched into a series of tales which went back to

the 1920s when he was with DuPont and worked with the inventor of NYLON[®] to make the material a viable commercial product. Frank must have been a person of some significance at DuPont; he said his name was on the patents. How I wish I'd done an oral history then! Ve get too zoon oldt und too late schmart!

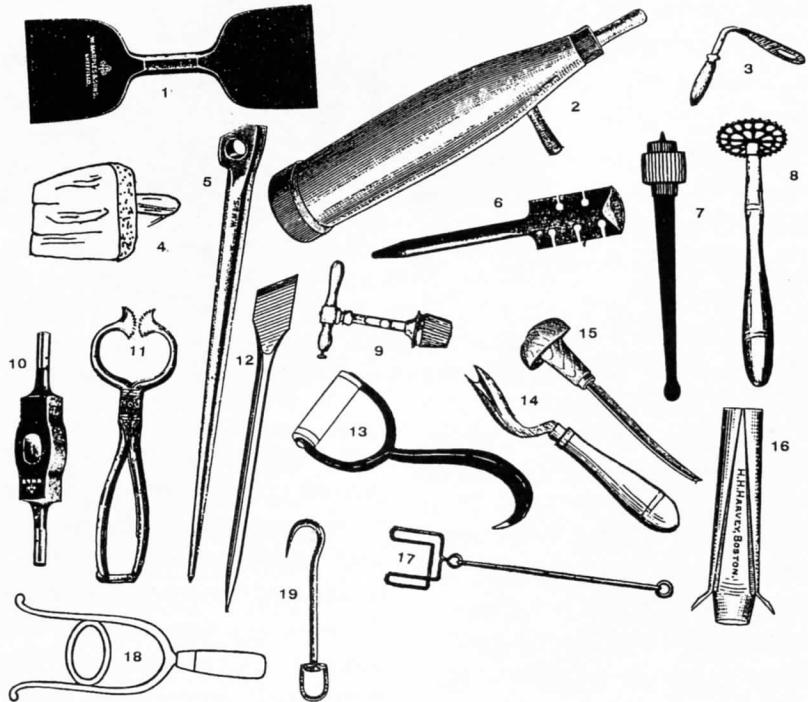
We welcome new contributor Sam Berliner to The Freeholder and look forward to future submissions. Sam is currently working on rectifying his perceived error of omission by conducting oral history interviews on the Historical Society's behalf!

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Can you name the pictured objects which come from various workplaces?

They are not to scale.

Answers on page 20.





THE GATHERING PLACE



"The Gathering Place" is the department of the magazine housing contributions of an historical slant but short length that might otherwise be lost among the longer pieces. To our members who are not ready to attempt long or deeply researched articles, this is the place for your notions and comments, however brief.

President Theodore Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War

By Arlene Goodenough

Sunday, August 5, 1905, was an momentous day for the townspeople of Oyster Bay.

President Theodore Roosevelt, in an effort to bring an end to the Russo-Japanese War, had invited both sides to meet with him to negotiate. Oyster Bay Harbor held two American warships, the Presidential yacht, *The Mayflower*, official launches and pleasure boats of every kind. Our President, dressed in frock coat, striped pants and top hat, motored out to *The Mayflower*, and

was greeted by a 21 gun salute. Then the U.S.S. *Tacoma* delivered Baron Komura of Japan, who was

accorded a 19 gun salute. He was followed by diplomat Sergei Witte on the U.S.S. *Chattanooga* who was also honored by a 19 gun salute. (One can only imagine how very happy every little boy in the neighborhood must have been to hear all that wonderful gunfire).

Roosevelt had a very ticklish

job. Both sides were extremely sensitive and proud and ready to be offended at any sign of one being favored over the other.

Roosevelt contrived to enter the salon where luncheon was served with both men simultaneously. It

men relaxed and agreed to proceed to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where the Peace Conference would be held.

In his autobiography, written in 1913, Roosevelt explained his reasons for trying to end the war.

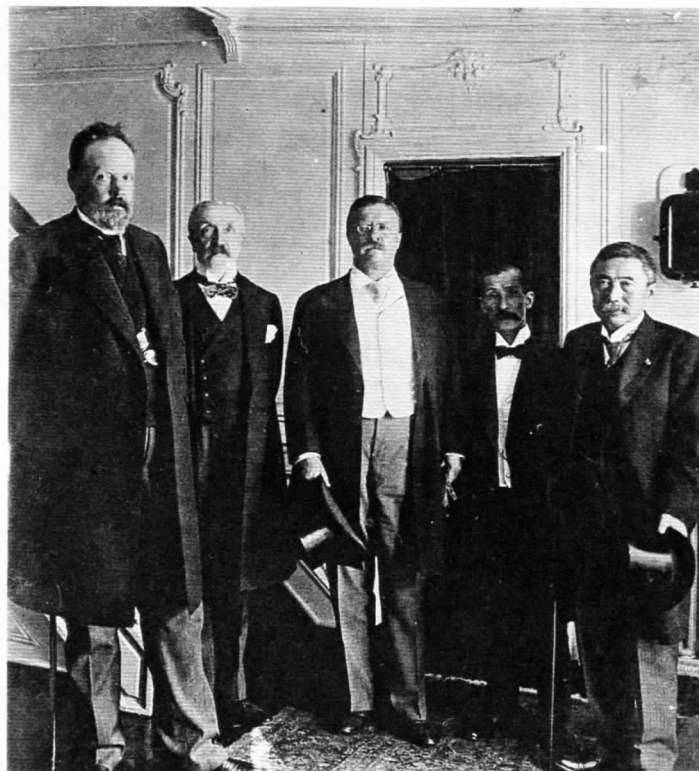
It had been a terrible drain on both nations to support the war effort and both countries were suffering. Roosevelt felt that the situation was causing a serious strain on the whole of the civilized world.

One of the main obstacles to peace was Japan's insistence on being paid a cash indemnity by Russia. Roosevelt diplomatically pointed out that though many countries had been sympathetic to their cause, they would not be supportive of Japan continuing a war over money.

In the end they saw

his point and the peace treaty was signed. Roosevelt felt that the world at large was much the better for it. The president was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize the next year. He received the medal and the sum of \$40,000. He donated the money toward the furtherance of industrial peace.

was a buffet lunch with a couch provided for the two enemies and a chair opposite for Roosevelt. This eliminated the touchy problem of who was to sit where. To avoid any awkwardness with toasts, Roosevelt announced that there would be only one toast which he would drink to the prosperity of both nations. Both



Theodore Roosevelt on the presidential yacht The Mayflower, Oyster Bay Harbor, August 5, 1905, with (left to right) the Russian delegates, Count Sergei Witte and Baron Roman Rosen, and the Japanese delegates, Baron Jutaro Komura and Minister Kogoro Takahira. Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library

Ancestral Village

By Robert Taylor

After several years of searching, I discovered that my wife's ancestors came from England as early as 1636-7 to Massachusetts; and then assisted in the founding of Oyster Bay, Long Island. And after a few more years, our family made a daytrip in 1995 to this beautiful town, known as the Village of Oyster Bay. We had a wonderful visit to this friendly town.

The Director of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, Mr. Thomas Kuehhas, suggested we write a brief article about the historical perspective of my wife's ancestors' contributions to Oyster Bay. It has been difficult to condense three hundred years of family notes, records, and information from all kinds of sources into a few paragraphs and try to make it interesting to a large audience. Maybe some folks can identify and relate to this lineage. Maybe there are some families that are related to this family because they will recognize a connecting link like I did after many years of research. I will attempt to describe some connecting links of the Wright Family of the past to one branch of the Wright family of the present. At best you may feel a kinship to the Wrights and develop a yearning to visit Oyster Bay as we did. It was fantastic to see where our ancestors lived, worked, worshipped, and help build their town and country.

Much has already been written about Peter, Nicholas, and Anthony Wright, who came with Reverend Leverich in 1653 to Long Island and purchased land

from the Indians, including the site of the Village of Oyster Bay. One of the best sources is H.D. Perrine's book, *Wright Family of Oyster Bay, Long Island*, published in 1923. This book contains the history of this Wright Family and its royal lineage to the Beaupre family in England. It also contains some of the first generations of Nicholas and Peter Wright.

I would like to list some of the connecting links to Peter Wright, a founder of Oyster Bay, and an ancestor to my wife, Becky Wright Taylor, to help other researchers.

Peter Wright had a son, Adam (1650-1698) who married Mary George Dennis. They had a son, Adam, Jr. (died 1749), known as yeoman of the east end of the Great Plains in the bounds of Oyster Bay. Adam, Jr. had a son, Peter, born in 1712 and died in 1793 in Botetourt County, Virginia. This Peter surveyed most of the early roads in Virginia and married Jane Hughart, daughter of James Hughart and Agnes Jordan of Augusta County, Virginia. Jane's will was recorded in Bourbon County, Kentucky, Book G, Page 105, in 1823. There has been much written about this Peter in the local history books of Alleghany County, Augusta County, Botetourt County, and the New River Settlements in Virginia. His will was probated in December 1793, Botetourt County, VA Book A, page 365.

TO BE CONTINUED

Ed. Note: While not the main content of the magazine, genealogical research is one of the Society's functions. From time

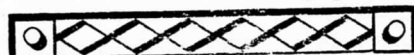
to time we will be printing family histories, so long as they are presented in narrative form.

Seth Norton, Tory Forager *continued from p. 6*

Since Oyster Bay was isolated from the main body of British troops and with its location directly on the Sound, it was a prime candidate for rebel raids from Connecticut. On May 16, 1779, Seth warned that "the Queen's Rangers will be marching from this place at 3 o'clock next Tuesday." Apparently, the Rangers never left or returned with no rebel attack. On December 8, 1779, Oyster Bay saw the last of Norton with a receipt for one cask of rum.

Norton probably remembered the time spent in Oyster Bay with fondness since he was then transferred to Charleston, South Carolina in the Spring of 1780. In a poignant letter from his stepfather he was told that after his mother finally arrived in New York in May 1780, she died from a smallpox inoculation. Then, while foraging in South Carolina he was captured by a unit of Francis Marion's militia in October 1781. While on parole, awaiting prisoner exchange, he was assaulted by Negro slaves on Izards Plantation. After many appeals, in September 1782 he was refused exchange by Gen. Nathaniel Greene (perhaps due to Tarleton's depredations).

Norton's whereabouts after the war are unknown. He died on March 2, 1808. A lock of his hair is included with his papers.



Commodore Swan

continued from p. 7

fell in love with Belle Thurston, daughter of William W. Thurston. They were married at the First Presbyterian Church at Oyster Bay on Wednesday, August 24, 1881. Following their marriage they took up residence in one of the oldest houses in the village, just east of Sandy Hill Road. Swan had purchased the house from John A. Weekes, whose family had owned it since the 1600s. The Commodore built greenhouses on a hill behind the house and began Seawanhaka Greenhouses. Later he opened a retail outlet for his flowers in the Fleet building on the corner of South Street and East Main Street, the location of

was also a free-spender with his inheritance and was often seen racing around the village roads in a fast buckboard.

Swan was very active in the affairs of the village and served on many boards, including the School Board. In 1898 he led a group that formed the first hospital in the new Nassau County, the appropriately named Nassau Hospital at Mineola. In addition, he was the President of the Oyster Bay Light and Power Company which delivered the first electric power to the village. He also formed the Oyster Bay Water Company which provided the first public water for the village, and when the telephone

reached Oyster Bay, it was Billy Swan who again led the way as President of the Queens County Telephone and Telegraph Supply Company.

Shortly before the First World War, Commodore Swan became involved in a personal and public battle with his long time friend,

Theodore Roosevelt. At the time, the school district was considering the expansion of the school system and the question arose about merging the Oyster Bay Cove School District into that of the village. Most of the children of the Cove residents went to private schools after finishing the primary grades at the Cove School. Swan was aligned with a group of Cove

residents who did not want to consolidate the Cove with the village school district. Their opposition was mainly due to the resultant increase in taxes. Theodore Roosevelt publicly announced his support of the consolidation by stating that the residents of the Cove were duty-bound to contribute to the support of a public school system whether their children used the facilities or not. Roosevelt was also concerned about the education of the children of the many estate workers, including those from his own estate. Both sides won with the Cove district's being consolidated with the village district, but the issue of a new school had to wait for another day.

In 1924 Billy Swan's health began to fail. He decided to move to Baltimore along with his wife and her sister, Julia Thurston, who was for over fifty years Preceptress of the Oyster Bay Schools. He made a few trips back to Oyster Bay, and was planning to attend a special meeting of Matinecock Lodge, when he died of heart failure on November 8, 1925, at the age of 78. A large delegation from the Lodge, plus many friends from the village, traveled to Baltimore to attend the memorial services and funeral for Swan. A large bronze plaque in the First Presbyterian Church at Oyster Bay honors the memory of William L. Swan and his more than half century of service to the church. Few people have left as great a mark on Oyster Bay as Commodore William Lincoln Swan, a Renaissance man in a Victorian image.



The First Presbyterian Church decorated for the wedding of Swan and Belle Thurston, August 24, 1881. Collection of John Hammond

the present Nobman's Hardware.

Swan remained closely connected with the people of the village and greatly enjoyed spinning yarns and singing sea chanties with the men who worked the oyster boats. On rainy days they often gathered around a pot-bellied stove in one of the shanties at the Oyster Dock to tell tales and sing songs. A bottle on the table added to the afternoon's pleasure. Billy Swan

CELTS & CELTIC-SPEAKERS IN COLONIAL NORTH AMERICA AND OYSTER BAY, Part III

By Gerald A. John Kelly

Given that almost all of Wales was Welsh-speaking until the mid-19th century, we can assume that the original Weeks, Ludlams, Williams, Lloyds, and Powells (an Anglicization of Ap Hoel, "Son of Hoel") in Oyster Bay were all Welsh-speaking. The Powell family also founded the Town of Southampton in Suffolk County in the 1630s by a grant from William Alexander, the (Scottish) Lord Stirling, who had received his grant from James VI of Scotland (a.k.a., James I of England).

As for the Irish of Oyster Bay, these can be categorized as they have been by Irish seanchai (genealogist/ historians) since the 16th century:

Gaeil (The "Gaelic Irish")

These are the descendants of the Celts who invaded Ireland between around the 8th century BC and the time of Christ. Some of these tribes came directly from ancient Gaul. Others came from Gaul via Celtic Britain. By the 5th century AD the Irish language (called Gaeilge by Irish and "Gaelic" by Americans) had become predominant in Ireland (replacing the other Celtic dialects which had accompanied Gaeilge to the island) and had been introduced into Pictland (which eventually became Scotland) and the Isle of Man. The aristocracy of the Gaeil were not exterminated and/or driven into exile (in France, Spain, Catholic Austria, and the Americas) until the 1690s. Oyster Bay folk at about 1700 who descend from these Gaeil include the following:

Bagley or Bagly-O Beaglaigh - Freelove Jones, the widow of

Major Thomas Jones of South Oyster Bay (now Massapequa), married Major Timothy Bagley in 1715. Timothy was a retired British army officer, and as such belonged to the Church of England. Because we know that Timothy was somehow connected to Thomas Bagley of Skibbreen, County Cork, we can identify his precise genealogy. The actual name of the Bagley (also called Begley) family of Cork is O Beaglaigh, which means "Grandson of Small Hero" in Irish Gaelic. They are originally a Gaelic-Norse family of gall-oglaigh ("foreign warriors," anglicized as "gallo-glasses") who arose in the Hebrides (islands off the western coast of Scotland) by the 12th century. Heavily armored in chain mail, they were famous for fighting with the spar, or long axe. Hired by the lightly-armed Gaeil to counter the armored forces of the Anglo-Normans, they arrived in Donegal sometime in the high Middle Ages. A branch of the family followed the MacSweeneys, another family of gall-oglaigh, to Cork at the end of the 15th century. The area around Skibbreen is still Irish Gaelic speaking as of course was Major Timothy Bagley. His relatives and contemporaries, Conor Begley and the Abbe Thade (i.e., Thaddeus) Begley, collaborated in the preparation and printing of Hugh MacCurtin's English-Irish Dictionary in Paris in 1732.

Mayo - Samuel Mayo, Peter Wright, and William Leveridge received the earliest conveyance of land from the Matinecock Indians in what is now the Town

of Oyster Bay in 1653. Mayo is one of the ways in which Mac Maighiu ('Son of Matthew') is anglicized in Co. Mayo. Although it is recorded that Samuel sailed to America from England, it is important to remember that ships from Irish ports were not permitted to sail directly to the Americas in the 17th century. Instead, a stop in England was required. Passengers could debark, remain indefinitely, or soon ship on a larger, transatlantic ship.

MacCoun (variously spelled McCoon/Macoun/Macoune/McCune) - Freelove Jones' sister Mary married William McCoun. The McCoun family remained closely allied with the Jones family throughout the colonial period. Samuel Macoune witnessed Major Thomas Jones' will. Another, occasionally spelling his name McCoon, was serving during the French & Indian War as David Jones, Jr.'s "waiter" (a military designation which I believe was akin to "orderly") when David died at the "Oneida Carrying Place" near Rome, N.Y. in 1757.

Sean-Ghaill ("Old Foreigners")

The Sean-Ghaill ("Old Foreigners") are the descendants of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland of the late 12th century. These invaders also included large numbers of Welsh and some Bretons. By the late 13th and early 14th centuries, these "Old Foreigners" were completely Gaelicized in language, law, custom, and dress. Speaking no English, the "English" Parliament of Sean Ghaill in Dublin had to have royal decrees translated into Irish Gaelic. This went on into

Irish Gaelic. This went on into the early 17th century, to the fury of such monarchs as Elizabeth I (d. 1603). Most of the Sean-Ghaill remained Catholic when England became Protestant, and sometimes led Irish resistance to English rule. These Catholic Sean-Ghaill uniformly sided with the Catholic James II in the "War of the Two Kings" (1689-1691).

The many Gaill Nua ("New Foreigners") who arrived in the 17th century almost all sided with the Protestant William of Orange (a.k.a., William III), given that they were either:

- a. grand and great-grandchildren of the large number of Presbyterians who took part in the Plantation of Ulster (beginning in 1608);
- b. children and grandchildren of the Puritans, Presbyterians, and other dissenters who had arrived during the English Civil War (1642- 1649) or under Cromwell (1649-1660); or
- c. smaller numbers of English and Scottish members of the Established Church. These last, along with the few Irish Protestants, feared that James would replace the Church of England with Catholicism.

When William beat James and crushed Irish opposition, his Parliament passed the "Penal Laws." These removed nearly all rights and property from Catholic Irish, whether Gaeil or Sean-Ghaill. Those Irish who wished to retain their rank, land, and privilege converted to the Church of Ireland (the Irish branch of the Church of England). Others, called "The Wild Geese," emigrated to other Catholic countries (such as France and Spain) where they could carry on the war against

England. Some came to America and became Protestant in order to obtain "the rights of Englishmen." Oyster Bay folk at about 1700 who descended from these Sean-Ghaill include the following:

Butler - de Buitleir ("the Butler"). The leaders of this Anglo-Norman family were the Earls of Ormond, seated in Kilkenny. They descend from Theobald Fitzwalter, who was made Chief Butler of Ireland in 1177. Although slowly Gaelicized, the Ormond Butlers retained close ties to the English crown. The Earl of Ormond was often appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (even under Charles II, d. 1685) and was typically the only member of the "English" Parliament in Dublin who could speak English until the 17th century. The Ormond Butlers became Protestant under Elizabeth, unlike most of the other Butlers and the other Sean-Ghaill.

Jones - As recorded on his tombstone, Major Thomas Jones was born in the barony of Strabane, County Tyrone about 1665. This is an area which was still partially Gaelic-speaking in 1851 (despite the terrible impact of the Great Hunger), so there is little doubt that Jones spoke Irish, probably as his original native language. In fact, Strabane remains only a few miles from the Irish-speaking districts of Donegal today. Jones is obviously of Welsh origin, although I have to assume that Major Thomas Jones' Welsh ancestor was one of the "Old Foreigners" for the following reasons:

- a. Thomas sided with James II in the war between William and

James. A Gall Nua would, almost unfailingly, have sided with William;

b. In America, Jones was known as a staunch defender of and adherent to the Episcopalian Church. This was the typical course of action for an Irish Catholic arriving here just after the anti-Catholic programs of the 1680s and 1690s. In contrast, Puritans and Presbyterians in America were steadfast enemies of the (Established) Episcopalian Church, and most of the Gaill Nua were dissenters;

c. "It is a matter of family tradition that Maj. Thomas Jones was descended from an Irish family that intermarried with one from Wales..." (Source: the Jones Family of Long Island by John H. Jones, Tobias A. Wright, New York, 1907, p. 14-15) This better described a Sean-Ghaill family than one of the Gaill Nua;

d. One Jones family tradition maintains that Thomas' mother was an heiress of an Irish family. (Source: The Jones Family of Long Island by John H. Jones, Tobias A. Wright, New York, 1907, p. 14) Although the Gaill Nua sometimes married into Irish Gaelic aristocracy, unions of the Gaeil and Sean-Ghaill were commonplace, and even expected for the purposes of peace-keeping and enhancement of Sean-Ghaill rights and privileges.

In closing then, Celts came to Oyster Bay looking for the opportunity and freedom denied them at home. When the time came to choose between America and England, remembrance of their own family and national tragedies placed them firmly in the American ranks, out of all proportion to their numbers in the New World.

AUNT EEEK



Olde Things: Advice on the
Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt EEEK,

The Historical Society of the Massapeguas has been given a silk wedding dress, c. 1911. We need advice on its care and preservation. It is an ivory color now, but it surely needs cleaning after 85 years. It is hand-embroidered with floss, machine-sewn otherwise. Metal hooks and eyes go up the back. We also have a white cotton dress c. 1915, we presume for a young girl. It took over an hour to iron, but is in fine condition. Any help will be much appreciated, even as to storage procedures.

Arlene Goodenough

Dear Arlene,

The subject of the proper care and conservation of textiles is perhaps the most intractable issue facing most small museums and historical societies (and large ones as well). Organic materials, (and perhaps textiles mostly) are part of the chain of nature and as such are subject to all of the laws of natural decomposition. Generally speaking, the more fragile the material, the more care and attention is required to arrest and contain the process.

Arlene, the following probably does not apply to your wonderful society but we feel that we must

tackle this issue in connection with your important question which opens an entire collecting theme: what to collect and why!

At the heart of your query is what we consider to be the real issue, which has always been the collecting policies, or lack of policy, which encourage donations without consideration to the long term commitment on the part of the receiving institutions. Most non-specific collecting institutions start with those things which are most easily gotten. Most often these are the things which individuals have saved and can no longer manage to keep. Big things (like horse-drawn vehicles and architecture) and fragile things (like glass and textiles) are the first to come, and the first to go. Certainly we can't pass up the opportunity to save Ben Franklin's sleeping cap. But are we able to give it the long-term care it demands? Thoreau said about collecting that "these things are more easily gotten than gotten rid of" and that "the collector becomes the collected." It has taken us many years to understand the full impact of these words. Unhappily, at their beginning, these institutions, generally initiated and run by enthusiastic non-professionals, rarely if ever consider the long term commitment they are about to undertake. In addition to caring for these objects, careful consideration must be given to the question of why we are saving them. Museums collect objects to use as teaching instruments. The most visible way to teach with objects is through exhibition. Proper exhibit techniques for textiles make large demands on generally small budgets. We believe that most textile collections will never be exhibited in any real way as it is simply too expensive and difficult to safely utilize these delicate artifacts.

We suggest that any collecting institution without a carefully

crafted collections policy to guide them through the water is skating on very thin ice. That policy should be very specific to the actual mission of the institution and restrict to protect not only the objects, but also the working staff and the institution itself from the kinds of responsibilities which can and do force the dissolution of some very fine establishments. If you need assistance with your collecting policy we suggest that you contact other local groups which collect and ask for a copy of their policy. We suspect that you will find most operating without a clear policy as defined here. You may also receive assistance from professional firms dedicated to these kinds of issues.

Now to your immediate request. We think that you will require some professional assistance with the long term care of your textiles as described. We will be sending you a list of textile specialists who will survey your objects and make specific recommendations based on first hand facts. Meanwhile you can store these artifacts in acid free storage containers and limit their environment to any extremes in temperature, humidity and light.

The bugs are always looking for a free meal and they are getting harder to control every day. Moth balls (para di-chloro benzene), which have always been the first line of defense against creatures, have been identified as suspicious health hazards and should probably not be handled at all. Most of the benign methods of insect control (like cedar chips) we find to be mostly useless. For now you may carefully examine your pieces visually and if your confidence is high you may seal the entire container in an airtight plastic bag. Check weekly for six months for any activity before you rest.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

JULY

Tues., July 15, 6-8 p.m.

Neighborhood Night

Bring the family and a picnic dinner and join your neighbors in the museum's beautifully-maintained gardens for an 18th and early 19th century songfest led by Eric Marten and his fiddle. Eric will tell the stories behind these popular songs of long ago and lead visitors in a sing-along. In addition, tours of the museum, hands on activities, and period children's games are all on tap. Join us!

AUGUST

Exhibit

Experience a whole series of exhibits in numerous locations in Oyster Bay featuring artifacts from the Reichman Collection recently donated to the Society. Different aspects of the collection will be covered at the Earle-Wightman House, Oyster Bay Town Hall East, the OB-EN Public Library, and State Bank of Long Island, and research materials associated with the collection will be available for more information on the tools and trades of bygone days.

SEPTEMBER

Sun., Sept. 28, 12-4 p.m.

Third Annual Old-Fashioned Children's Fair

Join your friends and neighbors for a fun and educational afternoon at the Earle-Wightman House. Period crafts, rides, games, baked goods, handicrafts, and loads of activities for the younger crowd will be featured at this enjoyable event which appeals to children of all ages. Reserve your tickets early! Call 922-5032 for more information.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p. 13

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Brick cleaner (chisel, hatchet) | 9. Trephine (trepan borer) |
| 2. Paver's rammer (dolly) | 10. Pig killing hammer |
| 3. Tongue depressor | 11. Sugar nippers |
| 4. Johnnycake or bannock board | 12. Striking knife, scribe |
| 5. Drawbore pin | 13. Pulp hook |
| 6. Saw set | 14. Sardine opener |
| 7. Lumberman's grab maul | 15. Graver or burin |
| 8. Potato masher | 16. Stone cutter's wedge and feathers |
| | 17. Toasting fork |
| | 18. Horse gag or speculum |
| | 19. Sail hook (third hand) |

The Conestoga Wagon

continued from p. 4

repeated on the Conestoga.

Side extensions to increase the depth of the wagon bed are found on all three types. Where front or rear panels are not already higher than the side panel, extensions for these also appear. Conestoga wagons were traditionally painted red for the running gear and blue for the wagon bed. These colors were by far the most common on 19th c. English wagons and were often employed on those of the Netherlands. The so-called "tool" box side-mounted on the Conestoga appears, although infrequently on English wagons of the 19th c. I have found none on Dutch wagons. More or less carving, at least on tail gates, is found on all three vehicles. The highly decorated iron work found on Conestogas apparently does not appear on English or Dutch wagons, leaving that feature to be claimed for the Pennsylvania Germans.

I think a case is made. What do you think?

THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
20 SUMMIT STREET P.O. BOX 297
OYSTER BAY, N.Y. 11771-0297

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OYSTER BAY, NY 11771
PERMIT NO. 14

